

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 378

Revelation 10

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Episode Summary

Revelation 10 is a hiatus from the trumpet judgments. The chapter describes a “mighty angel” who holds a scroll that the awestruck John will take from his hand and eat. This odd language has Old Testament precedent in Ezekiel. However, it is the angel that has drawn the most attention from scholars. This angel is simultaneously described with phrases that have occurred earlier in the book—in descriptions of God and Jesus. Is this confusion on John’s part, or a theological contradiction? This episode addresses those questions.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 378: Revelation 10. I’m the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he’s the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! What’s going on?

MH: Hey! What’s going on? Well, I think it’s better to say, “What *almost* went on?”

TS: Uh oh.

MH: I almost... No, it’s not... You’re thinking the beach. It’s not that. So you’re still safe with the “under.” Alright? But I *almost* went in our pool. What I mean by that is, the thought entered my mind. [TS laughs] Then I got distracted. [laughs] Seriously.

TS: I was going to say you might’ve almost fallen in.

MH: No, no, I was acting with intention, like, “It’s hot today; I think I’ll go in the pool for the first time.” But then I got distracted. I don’t know. Maybe Drenna gave me something to do, or I forgot something I was supposed to do. But I never got there. [TS laughs] So it *did* enter my head. And it *almost* happened. So that’s, like, “almost news.” [laughs]

TS: Well, we need a new over/under for the pool. I’m going to go over/under 5 ½ that you get in the pool for the entire summer.

MH: Wow, that's ambitious!

TS: I figured, over the entire summer...

MH: And the beach was what, 2?

TS: No, 1 ½.

MH: 1 ½, okay. [sigh] Well.

TS: And the pool is 5 ½.

MH: Is Vegas going to hear about that? Is that what the angle is here? [laughs]

TS: I'm sure there's a sports bookie out there that listens to the show. [MH laughs]

MH: I'm sure. [laughs]

TS: And if you're out there and you see this on the board, let us know. Because that would be... I don't know if that's troubling, or cool, at the same time. I don't know.

MH: [laughs] Yeah, I'd vote for "troubling." [laughs]

TS: I might vote for "cool," Mike.

MH: Anyway, something almost happened this week.

TS: Breaking news. That's podcast worthy.

MH: That's the best I can do. Now we have to get into Fantasy Football mode a little bit, because Tim Tebow did sign in Jacksonville. That was news in Jacksonville this week. So I'm just going to say it right now. I don't plan on picking him. Okay? But there you go.

TS: But if he's there...

MH: I'll let you pick him, Trey.

TS: Yeah, I'll take him! You kidding me? We need to get Tim on the show! That'd be... You need to work your magic. I know you've got connections there, Mike, with the Jaguars.

MH: I know. He lives about ten minutes from me. You know? It just...

TS: Let's get him on the show!

MH: It's Tebow, so...

TS: Let's get him on the show.

MH: We can't even get him into church. Because he's been at the church before. And it's like... We actually had this discussion in the offices. It's like, "Tebow's going to retire from baseball. He won't have to put up with spring training anymore. He's going to be home more." Because we have this TV channel thing at Awakening. And it's like, "Surely he'd have something he'd want to talk about." And then a week later, we hear this football news. It's like, "Well, there that goes. Now he's going to be tied up with that." So I don't know. You know? Maybe at some point we'd actually make some kind of connection. But yeah, if I could get him on the podcast, we would do that.

TS: Does he go to y'all's church?

MH: Uh, no. I don't know where he goes. It's not at Celebration, no. He has spoken there before in the past. Probably, like, 15 years ago or something. But there are a few people who know him. And we have one guy on staff that played for the Jags too. So that would be an easy contact to make. But maybe at some point.

TS: There you go. Tim, if you're listening, you've got an open invitation. There you go.

MH: [laughs] There you go. Open invitation.

TS: My phone is turned on. [MH laughs]

MH: Well, if he *is* listening, he might be offended that I just said I wouldn't pick him. So maybe I'll rethink that. I don't know.

TS: No, it's too late. I got him. Sorry.

MH: It depends how the draft is looking. [laughs]

TS: Alright, Mike. Well, we're *almost* halfway through Revelation. Almost. Just like you *almost* got in the pool.

MH: That's right, that's right. Well, I'd say the chances are more secure that we'll finish Revelation than that I'll get in the pool. But I don't know. The thought might re-emerge in my head, and the clouds may part, and I might actually go in. So who knows.

5:00

TS: Well, the audience and I won't hold our breath.

MH: [laughs] That's good. That's good advice right there. [laughs] Yeah, we're in Revelation 10 today. I actually did have that thought, too. It's like, "Wow! We're almost halfway!" And I think what probably made me think about it was Revelation 11. Because we're going to be tackling that next time, obviously (because we're doing chapter 10 today). I don't know how I'm going to do chapter 11, to be honest with you. Because this is linked to the ending of the second novel in some sort of peripheral way. Now there was a contest for the novel that involved... There was a riddle given. And most people... I worded the riddle in such a way that they would think of Revelation 11, even though that's not the answer to the riddle. But it's like, "How do I discuss Revelation 11 without giving anything away?" Because it's related to the answer. It's not the answer. But there's some relationship. And I have to be careful not to trip myself up here. I'll figure something out. I don't want to telegraph anything.

So Revelation 10 today. Let's just jump in. This is one of the shorter chapters. I'm going to read through the chapter, since it is short, and then we're going to pick our way through it. But to be honest with you, we're going to spend most of the time on the "angel" stuff early in the chapter, and a little bit from verses 8 on. But the "mighty angel coming down from heaven." So let's just jump in. Verse 1 begins with that line:

Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. ²He had a little scroll open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, ³and called out with a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he called out, the seven thunders sounded. ⁴And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down." ⁵And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven ⁶and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, ⁷but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

⁸Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." ⁹So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little

scroll. And he said to me, “Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey.” ¹⁰ And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. ¹¹ And I was told, “You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings.”

So that’s Daniel... (Or not Daniel. We’re going to actually get to Daniel 10 at one point.) That’s *Revelation 10*. Again, it’s short. And we’re going to spend most of our time today on this “angel” language. We have here in the first verse, “another mighty angel coming down from heaven” (look at the description) “wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.” Now *all* of those elements should sound familiar. The “wrapped in a cloud” part sort of sounds like Daniel 7 (the son of man), but if you go back and look at Daniel 7, it’s not precise—it’s not exact. The son of man in Daniel 7 comes “with the clouds” or “on the clouds,” depending on how you translate that. He’s not “wrapped in a cloud.” But again, there’s this similarity to it. You have the rainbow over his head.” Now that sounds like Revelation 4:3. So let me read that. Revelation 4:3 says:

³ And he who sat there [MH: the one seated on the throne in verse 2] had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.

10:00

Again, it just sounds a little bit like what we’re reading in chapter 10. But here in Revelation 4, it’s speaking of God. So to this point, we’ve got one line that sort of sounds like the son of man, who is a deity figure. Those who have read *Unseen Realm* know the arguments that lie behind that—the “cloud rider” motif used only of Yahweh in the Old Testament the other four times it occurs. The fifth time it occurs it’s in this chapter (Daniel 7), and it’s not used of the Ancient of Days, who is God, but it’s used of the son of man. But it’s a deity epithet. But again, you have similar-but-not-quite-the-same. Here we have “rainbow over his head.” That sounds like God from the description in Revelation 4:3, but not quite exact. And if you recall, when we discussed Revelation 4:3, the “rainbow” description is found in the Old Testament in Ezekiel 1:28. This is the famous vision of Ezekiel in chapter 1, where you have God seated on the throne and you have this “rainbow” language in Ezekiel 1:28. That’s what John is picking up on in Revelation 4:3. But it’s God. So what’s with the “mighty angel” here?

Then you have another line: “face like the sun.” Again, this is very similar to Revelation 1:16. So let’s look at that.

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands one like a

son of man [MH: so there you have that phrase], clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire...

Remember, this is the passage where we have Jesus described in Daniel 7 language. And it's not only the son of man stuff that you would expect, but the Ancient of Days description in Daniel 7 is transferred to Jesus here. John does both.

¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

You have that in Revelation 10 as well, except it's like a lion. And here's the verse:

¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

So you get this "face like the sun" in Revelation 10 used of the mighty angel—to describe the mighty angel. But back in Revelation 1:16 it's Jesus. And it's pretty precise in this case. And it harkens back to Matthew 17:2—the transfiguration of Jesus. You get the same kind of language. "Legs like pillars of fire" from Revelation 1:14 (we just read that) also used of Jesus. It's not precise in this case. Back in Revelation 1:14 it was "his eyes were like flames of fire." But again, you get the notion that there's some relationship here. You get the "eyes like fire" as well in Revelation 2:8, and later in Revelation 19:12. So what in the world's going on here? We have a "mighty angel" described in the ways that Jesus is described and the ways that God is described. So how do we reconcile Jesus and God who are uncreated, eternal beings—the Godhead thing—with a "mighty angel" getting described the same way?

Now I'm going to suggest (and this isn't new to me, this is part of the whole discipline known as Jewish Christology or Jewish binitarian monotheism)... Again, it's the Two Powers stuff. But I'm going to suggest that this is a case of what scholars call "angelomorphic Christology"; that is, it is similar to John's earlier merging of certain Old Testament passages about the son of man and ancient of Days to point to Jesus. Here, though, in this case, we're going to see John combine Old Testament theophany motifs that were used to describe three figures in the Old Testament: (1) God; (2) the Angel of Yahweh (the Angel of the Lord); and (3) the divine man, who is of greater authority than Gabriel and Michael in the book of Daniel. So those three figures: (1) God; (2) the Angel of the Lord, who is God—that's the Two Yahwehs thing; (3) and then there's this character in Daniel, the divine man, who is above Gabriel and Michael in the book of Daniel. He's never given a name. He's just described. Those three

15:00

figures are described in certain ways that Revelation 10 uses. So this is what would be called in scholarly parlance “angelomorphic Christology.” I would argue that this figure in Revelation 10 is the second person of the Trinity appearing as a man. He is called an angel here because of the Old Testament angel of Yahweh motifs, hence this category in the study of Jewish Christology or Jewish binitarian monotheism called “angelomorphic Christology.”

Now the point of the category, lest this be misunderstood, is *not* that the risen Christ was an angel, and therefore, created. That is not the point in the academic discussion. It’s not just me, but just generally in the academic discussion that is not the point. Because this angel... It goes back to the Angel of the Lord, who *is* Yahweh. He’s not created. So that would be an amateurish ax to grind “mistake” or intentional error designed to deny the deity of Christ. That’s not what we’re talking about here (and again, neither do academics that are into this). Rather, this language (angelomorphic Christology) is to associate the risen Christ with THE angel, who is God. That’s why the category gets labeled the way it is. This is easy to get wrong on the part of those who cannot (or will not) see the close association between Yahweh himself and his angel in the Old Testament. Once you discern the two Yahweh figures... (Again, go back to my book, *The Unseen Realm*.) Once you have that in your head, you can parse this language here.

So let’s unpack it a little bit. Now Aune writes of the description... In the first few verses of Revelation 10, he talks about the mighty angel. He says, apparently, when it says “another”... Let’s go back to Revelation 10, just so that we can track with what Aune is saying here. “Then I saw another mighty angel...” That’s the way chapter 10 opens. Aune says:

The *allos*, “another,” apparently refers to the only *angelos ischuros*, “mighty angel,” mentioned earlier, i.e., in [MH: Revelation] 5:2... Charles [MH: R. H. Charles was an early 20th century scholar of Revelation and Enoch – his name will be familiar to a lot of you] (1:258–59) has speculated that Gabriel could be identified as the mighty angel [MH: this was Charles’], since the Hebrew term גִּבּוֹר *gibbôr*, “mighty one,” can refer to “Gabriel” [MH: Gabriel (Gavriel) and *gibbôr* have the same consonants] (which means “mighty one of God”). There is, however, no reason to suppose that the author had any particular angel in view [MH: and I would agree with Aune’s assessment there against Charles]. This is a formal link between two text units that deal with scrolls. Bauckham argues that the unique role of this angel and the majestic way in which he is described suggest that he should be identified with the centrally significant revelatory angel of Rev 1:1; [MH: and Revelation] 22:16 because it is the scroll in Rev 10 that contains the primary content of John’s prophetic revelation (“Conversion,” 254–55) [MH: and then Bauckham has three points]: (1) God gave the revelation to Jesus Christ (Rev 1:1) = the Lamb received the scroll from the hand of the one seated on the throne (Rev 5:7). (2) The revelation of Jesus Christ (1:1) = the Lamb

opened the scroll and revealed its contents (Rev 6:1–8:1). (3) He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John (1:1) = the angel brings the opened scroll from heaven and gives it to John (10:2, 8).

So what Bauckham is saying here is that the revelation given to Jesus, and Jesus being the Lamb, and the Lamb opening the scroll, and then the scroll getting handed to John—these things are interconnected in these passages.

20:00

Now the first two observations of Bauckham have the revelation given to Jesus, who is the Lamb. That's kind of obvious. So then Bauckham goes on to note "He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John (1:1)." Now that makes it sound—that makes it *sound*—like Jesus cannot be this angel. Again, I'm going to disagree. Because if the content of Revelation 1:1 is supposed to have Jesus play the role of God in the Old Testament (in effect, occupying the "God slot" in the Two Powers pattern of the Old Testament), then Jesus and the angel *can* be co-identified. You can still do that. In the book of Revelation, you have the risen Christ being portrayed in this way and the angel language is used of him to take the reader's mind back to the angel who is God in the Old Testament. That's the trajectory that I'm going to suggest. And this isn't unique to me. This is something that gets discussed in the Two Powers discussion more broadly in New Testament scholarship.

Now by way of illustration, let's go back to Exodus 23. It's a familiar Two Powers passage. God says to Moses:

²⁰ "Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. ²¹ Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him.

²² "But if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

²³ "When my angel goes before you...

So God is the sender. "I send an angel," but yet the angel is referred to as "my angel" who has God's name in him. He is God. So it's like God sending himself. And it's this kind of language because of the Name theology. And again, if this is a strange already to you, you need to go back and read *Unseen Realm*. I can't take podcast episodes to rehearse all of the information about the Name theology and Exodus 23 and Genesis 48 and all these passages where you have two Yahweh figures (one invisible and transcendent; the other one visible, Yahweh coming in human form, as a man, not incarnation, but in the form of a

man in the Old Testament, and oftentimes that man is called “the angel.” He’s also called the Word. He’s also called the Name. He’s also the one who rides in the clouds. All these things are related. But God can send an angel and say, “You know, this angel... My Name is in him, so you’d better obey him.” And the Name is another way of referring to God himself. So God is basically saying, “I’m in that angel. I’m sending him, but I’m in that angel. I’m sending myself.” This is where you get this Godhead language in the Old Testament. God is the sender but “my angel” (his angel) is also him. Because the name is in him.

Now let’s take this back to Revelation 1 and Revelation 22. This is what Bauckham is referring to. Here’s Revelation 1:1:

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave [to] him...

God gave to him, to Jesus. And John’s other writings make this clear. The Gospel of John 17:7-8; John 8:26; John 14:10. You have the same idea. God the Father giving revelation to Jesus the Son.

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him [MH: i.e., Jesus] to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He [MH: that is, God] made it [MH: the revelation] known [MH: how?] by sending his angel to his servant John...

Do you see how that parallels Exodus 23? So God is the sender. He’s sending the revelation to Jesus. And how does this work? He’s sending the revelation. And the revelation really either *is* Jesus (it’s the work of Jesus, more abstractly, and these sorts of things)... How does he make this revelation known to John? Well, he sends his angel. And again, if you read through Revelation 1... And when we get to Revelation 22, listen to what Jesus himself says:

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches.

Here Jesus is in the God role, sending his angel, whereas in Revelation 1:1 God is in that role, sending Jesus, i.e., his angel. Then you go back to Revelation 10, you’ve got this angel who’s characterized four or five ways the way God is and the way the Angel of the Lord is, but he’s nevertheless called an angel. He’s also characterized the way Jesus is characterized by John earlier in Revelation, but he’s called an angel. I mean, all of these things are sort of similar ways of expressing the same idea, and that idea can be summed up with two words: *angelomorphic Christology*. We’re talking about Jesus the risen Christ as a deity figure, but using angel terminology of him to specifically link him back to the Old Testament Two Powers idea of God sending an angel who really was God anyway. Again, it’s a convoluted sort of thing. And this is why there’s so much

25:00 commentary on Revelation 1:1, on Revelation 22:16, on Revelation 10, the first few verses. Okay? Aune says,

God is the ultimate source of revelation, and Christ, the agent of that revelation, transmits it to believers.

Right, he does. But then in chapter 22, Jesus plays the God role, where *he's* sending an angel to testify to John. It's like the slots are interchangeable. And that's part of both the interpretive problem for us, because the language sounds so odd, but again, if we realize how God and the angel in the Old Testament were interchangeable (they're the same but different), John is kind of doing the same sort of things here in the book of Revelation that Old Testament writers do with God and the angel (the two Yahwehs, how they're different but yet they're the same). This same thing is happening here. And the reason we get angel language or things said about this figure in Revelation 10 called the "mighty angel" is because of this. This is John, again, using this language—using angel language—of a being that he has earlier... He describes this being in ways that he earlier described both God and Jesus (the Ancient of Days and the son of man). But nevertheless, he uses angel terminology here. The only way to coherently unpack that is to have the Two Powers idea—the two Yahwehs idea (God and his angel both being God but yet different persons). This Godhead thinking back in the Old Testament is the only way you can unravel this and make some sense out of it. So this is what I'm suggesting that we have going on here.

Now the angel here is not named. And I agree with Aune that Charles should not assume that it's Gabriel. Because even if you go back into Daniel (which we're going to do here in a moment), Gabriel is not the highest authority. He is not an angel that gets described in deity terms. There is another unidentified "man"... [laughs] Okay? Daniel actually uses the term "man." There is another unidentified "man" in the heavens (the heavenlies) who is above Gabriel and Michael that gets described some of these ways. So I'm going to defer here to my *Angels* book. I'm going to read you some sections of my *Angels* book. If you have the book, it's pages 72-73. And you'll see how Gabriel has a lesser status. There's something (someone, some heavenly "man") who is above him, and above Michael, too.

In Daniel 8:15–26 a "man" comes to assist Daniel in understanding the vision:

When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai [MH: this river], and it [MH: the voice] called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."

So this unidentified man is speaking to Gabriel. He's commanding Gabriel to help Daniel make sense of the vision.

So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end." (Dan 8:15–17)

The description of this assistance is our focus here, and its wording will prompt us to return to the phrase "prince of the host [MH: used elsewhere in Daniel – we'll return to that]." The "man" Daniel sees [MH: I should say the man who comes to him is Gabriel, because Gabriel is commanded by this other man to explain things to Daniel] turns out to be the angel Gabriel (v. 16). But Gabriel is commanded to speak to Daniel by the voice of another "man," emanating from between the banks of the Uлай river, where Daniel had been when overcome by the vision (Dan 8:2). The unseen "man" is superior to Gabriel for he commands him. Gabriel appears again to Daniel to interpret a subsequent vision (Dan 9:20–23). In Daniel 10:4–6, 9–21 the prophet once again sees a vision involving a glorious "man clothed in linen":

30:00

On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist.

Okay, the sash around the waist. We've already seen that in the book of Revelation. We've also seen what follows here.

His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude....

Okay, all that you can find in Revelation 1, Revelation 10. In Revelation 1 it's Jesus; in Revelation 10 it's the mighty angel. Again, it's angelomorphic Christology. So here we have this mystery man again. And this is how the mystery man is described, the one who had commanded Gabriel. So back to Daniel 10, we read:

Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.

And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, “Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.”

Let me stop there. So this superior man, this man who is above Gabriel (and apparently above Michael, because Michael is assisting him), this man himself was sent by somebody. We don't read by whom in Daniel 10, but the implication is God. So God sending his... It doesn't say "angel" in the passage, but you get the idea. God can send his angel, and the angel can still be God. So you're getting that feel again in Daniel 10. We have a figure here that is above Michael and above Gabriel. Michael is one of the chief princes. But this figure is above the chief princes. Why? Because he's above Gabriel, and Gabriel is one of the archangels too. So we have a superior figure—an ontologically superior figure—who himself gets sent, the implication is by God. But he can still be God because of Exodus 23 and some of these other passages in the Old Testament elsewhere.

When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips [MH: so there's another figure in here]. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, “O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me.”

Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. And he said, “O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage.”

Which is interesting, where else that occurs in the Old Testament. I don't want to rabbit trail.

And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince. (Dan 10:4–6, 9–21)

“Michael’s the good guy, and he helps me.” Again, Michael is prince of Israel. But this figure is not Michael. He’s referring *to* Michael. So we can’t conflate these figures. There are certain traditions that do that, like Seventh Day Adventism. They’re clearly different. And Michael is one of the chief princes, like Gabriel is. But this guy commands chief princes. They’re different people. They’re different figures. So to summarize some of the things to notice here about the exchange:

First, this “man” [MH: in either Daniel 8 or Daniel 10] is *not* identified as Gabriel. Second, the speaking “man” was opposed by the “prince” of Persia (v. 13) and Greece. Third, the “man” is not only distinct from Gabriel; he is also not Michael, since he refers to Michael in the third person (vv. 13, 20). Michael assisted this unidentified figure in his spiritual warfare against the prince of Persia. Fourth, the unidentified figure later touches Daniel (v. 18) to strengthen him, informing him in the first person, “I will return to fight against the prince of Persia,” adding that he expects the “prince of Greece” will also be part of the battle (v. 20).

35:00

While the “man” is never identified in Daniel 10, it is clear he is neither Gabriel nor Michael. We meet the “man” again in Daniel 12 [MH: so we have here]:

At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.... Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. And someone said to the man clothed in linen...

So there’s the man clothed in linen again. It’s not Michael, because Michael’s getting talked about.

[S]omeone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters [MH: remember, above the Ulai and above the Tigris] of the stream, “How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?” (Dan 12:1, 5)

“The man clothed in linen” takes us back to the initial appearance of this mysterious figure in Daniel 10:5 [MH: and even in Daniel 8]. Who is this “man”? I would argue [MH: and again, I’m referencing my book here] that he [MH: this mystery man] is to be identified with the “prince of the host” [MH: he’s the prince who is above the whole heavenly host] mentioned in Daniel 8:11—the one whom the magnified little horn opposed. In this regard [MH: I quote an article by Bampfylde—it’s a really good article on this whole issue], Bampfylde comments:

Who then is this man? The author does not identify him with Gabriel, which he could easily have done (cf. 8:16; 9:21). Daniel has already met Gabriel (8:16), and would have recognized him if there were a renewed acquaintanceship [MH: if it was Gabriel, he would’ve known it]. The man whom he sees in ch. 10 is to be identified with the one who had spoken to Gabriel and sent him to Daniel: “And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, ‘Gabriel, make this man understand the vision’ ” (8:16). The man whom Daniel sees in ch. 10 “clothed in linen” is described again in 12:6 as “the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream”. He is therefore the man whose voice Daniel heard coming from between the banks of the Ulai when he first saw Gabriel [MH: it’s the guy who was commanding Gabriel]. The man is not Michael. Indeed, he appears to have a higher status than Michael, the patron of Israel according to 10:21, “there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince”. This man seems not to be in charge of any particular nation, but supports those who are on “his side.” ... He is therefore to be identified with “the Prince of the host” (8:11). This Prince of the host is not Michael, for although Michael is the patron of Israel and an archangel, he is *not chief* of the archangels [MH: here or including] in intertestamental literature, e.g. [MH: you don’t get that in] 1 Enoch 9:1–10:16; 20:5; 24:6; 54:6; 60:4–5; 68:2; 71:9. In the Book of Daniel there is no possibility that Michael might be the chief Prince. He is known as “one of the chief princes” (Dan. 10:13), whereas the Prince of the host (8:11) is called “the Prince of princes” (8:25). The man described in 10:5–6 is certainly one of the highest angels,—a “Prince” and a heavenly military commander. Neither is he to be identified with Gabriel, for he addresses Gabriel himself.

So we’ve got this mystery figure who’s a higher authority. And it looks like the highest authority other than God. Now:

These observations are important in light of my earlier contention [MH: that I read to you] that the commander (“prince”) of Yahweh’s host in Joshua 5:14 is the angel of Yahweh...

40:00

And again, for those of you who have read *Unseen Realm*, you know what the arguments are here. The captain of the Lord's host, the commander—the word is *sar*. It's prince. He's the Prince of the host. Just like the guy in Daniel—the Prince of princes, the Prince of the host. And in Joshua 5:14, the key phrase is... When Joshua has this conversation with the captain, the Prince of the Lord's host, he's standing there with a drawn sword in his hand. That phrase in Hebrew... The Hebrew behind that phrase occurs only two other places in the Hebrew Bible and they are both the Angel of the Lord. That's Numbers 22 and 1 Chronicles 20. You can read this in the *Angels* book or in *Unseen Realm* or whatever. So I'm arguing that this mystery figure is in fact the Angel of the Lord who is God. He is but isn't. And that's why he has this status in the book of Daniel.

Now there remains one other point to make this case—this identification. In Daniel 8, the passage where the little horn is magnified “even as great as the Prince of the host” (verse 11) and he “rises up against the Prince of princes” (Daniel 8:25), that has an intriguing parallel elsewhere in Daniel. Since most scholars identify the little horn as Antiochus IV (he's the antichrist typological figure)... And basically, every view of the antichrist notes this typology. The little horn is the king described in Daniel 11 (the king of the North, and all this stuff). So here's how it works. In Daniel 8:11 and 8:25 we have these two statements.

[The little horn] became great, even as great as the Prince of the host.

And then that's followed by:

[The king representing the little horn] shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes.

If you go over to Daniel 11, where the earthly counterpart to the little horn figure is being talked about, here's what you read:

And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods.... He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all.

So in Daniel 8, the little horn vaunts himself against the Prince of princes. In Daniel 11, this king (the earthly counterpart) vaunts himself against the God of gods. So the Prince of princes equals the God of gods. And the only way that works is the Two Powers—the two Yahwehs—idea. Okay? The Angel of the Lord is the Prince of the host, the Prince of princes, and he's also God. That's the only way this works. So these parallels lead some scholars to suggest that these titles of Daniel 8:11 and 8:25 (Prince of the host, Prince of princes) are epithets that

refer to God himself. The parallel is Daniel 11:36-37. And again, that makes good sense if the Prince of the host and the Prince of princes is the Angel of the Lord. The Prince (English translations have the captain or commander) of Yahweh's host in Joshua 5:14... And again, that figure there in Joshua 5 with the drawn sword in his hand... The Hebrew phrase occurs only two other places and it's *definitely* the Angel of the Lord in both of those places. So Michael is not this guy. And he can't simultaneously be *one* of the chief princes and the Prince of princes. It doesn't work for Michael. You need a figure higher than Michael.

Now all of that we take back to Revelation 10. What we're doing here is showing how you can have an angel described as deity in the Old Testament. You have Exodus 23, you have the Daniel passages here, and you've got Joshua 5. And again, if you've read *Unseen Realm*, you know about the other... You know, in Genesis 31 there's one of these. Genesis 48. In Genesis 31, the angel says, "I am the God of Bethel." I mean, how clear is that? In Genesis 48, Jacob's prayer for Joseph's kids, "May the God who did this, may the God who did that," third stanza: "May the angel who XYZ, may *he* (not they) bless the boys." You have this co-identification of God with his angel. The invisible God and the visible God is the angel. Two Yahwehs. It happens elsewhere in the Old Testament. And what I'm suggesting here is when we hit this in Revelation 10, John's doing the same thing. So it's okay for him to use "angel" language to describe Jesus, and even God. Because he uses descriptions of Jesus and God that he's used earlier to describe both of them. Here he's describing a "mighty angel." It's okay. He's not confused, because he knows the two Yahwehs paradigm in the Old Testament.

So let's go to verse 5 in Revelation 10. What I've just said is not inconsistent with Revelation 10:5-7. Here's what those verses say, to remind you:

⁵ And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven ⁶ and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, ⁷ but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets.

45:00

Now all that would mean is that the "angel who is Jesus" (i.e., the angel who is God, because Jesus is God) swears by God the Father. He's lifting up his hand to God the Father and swearing this oath. Again, it's this gesture of communication, so on and so forth. Because the scroll was in the hand of God the Father earlier. The angel of verse 7 is an unidentified angel who is going to sound the seventh trumpet. But you have this particular angel—the mighty angel—who's described in deity terms, lifting up his hand and making a vow, swearing to God himself. That's okay because the second person of the Trinity, if

you will, the Angel of the Lord in the Old Testament, if you will, is the servant of God the Father. There's no inconsistency here in terms of later Christology that we're going to get in the New Testament in other language. So again, let's just keep that straight. Verses 8 and 9:

⁸ Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." ⁹ So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll. And he said to me, "Take and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

¹⁰ And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. ¹¹ And I was told, "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

Now if you're familiar with the Old Testament, you ought to know where this comes from, this "eating the scroll" language and having it taste like honey. This is right out of Ezekiel. There are clear Old Testament antecedents to this scene, where... Who is giving the scroll to Ezekiel? *God*. Who is giving the scroll to John in Revelation 10? *The angel*. Is there a contradiction? No. This is another reason why the angel is described in deity terms. Again, it's angelomorphic Christology. It's Godhead language. Now Beale and McDonough comment on these last few verses here about eating the scroll. They say this:

The precise reference for eating the scroll is clearly Ezek. 2:8–3:3 [MH: that whole section]. Ezekiel is called to warn Israel about their impending doom if they do not repent of their unbelief and idolatry (3:17–21; 5–14). He is to preach so that the nation will "know that a prophet has been among them," but also he is told that "Israel will not be willing to listen" to his message because "the whole house of Israel has a hard forehead and a stiff neck" (2:2–8; 3:4–11). Therefore, his message is primarily one of judgment [MH: back in Ezekiel it's a judgment message]. This is explicitly emphasized by the description of the scroll: "it was written on the front and back, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe" (2:10). However, there will be a remnant who will respond and repent (3:20; 9:4–6; 14:21–23). The prophet's eating of the scroll signifies his identification with its message.

The sweet taste of the scroll alludes to the life-sustaining attribute of God's word that empowers the prophet to carry out his task (e.g., Deut. 8:3), and to the positive and joyous effect that God's words have in instructing and guiding those who submit to them (e.g., Ps. 19:7–11; 119:97–104; Prov. 16:21–24; 24:13–14).

50:00

Although Ezekiel's task is a sober one, he takes pleasure in the message of woe because it is God's will, which is good and holy. However, he does not contemplate this pleasure for long, since he focuses on the overall purpose of his call to announce judgment. Although Ezekiel does not refer to the scroll as being bitter in his stomach, he does refer to the scroll's "lamentations and mourning and woe" (2:10), which elicited in him a "bitter" response (3:14) after he ate it (cf. 3:3a). The bitterness is in response to either his grief over Israel's impending doom or his anger over their refusal to repent. Notable parallels are found in Jer. 6:10b–11a and, especially, 15:16–17: "Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart.... You filled me with anger." In context, the delight and anger of God's words that Jeremiah eats refer respectively to the prophet's own comfort and to the judgment of his enemies (the LXX of Jeremiah has, instead of "anger," the word *pikria* ["bitterness"], which is the nominal form of the verb used in Rev. 10:9–10).

So I'll stop there with Beale and McDonough. There are clear connections back to Ezekiel and to Jeremiah about this language of Revelation 10 about the scroll. And the point to recognize (as we wrap up here) is who gave Ezekiel the scroll? Who gave the words to Jeremiah? Whose words were they that he ate? And the answer to both of those is, "God." Who is giving the scroll to John in Revelation 10? The mighty angel—the mighty angel who is described the way Jesus is described earlier in the book of Revelation, and the mighty angel who is described the way God is described earlier in the book of Revelation and in the Old Testament, in the form of God the Father (in theophany) but also God as the Angel of the Lord.

So what we have here, I'm not going to pretend it's not a little difficult to wrap your mind around. And I've said in *Unseen Realm* and in other books. If we were just in the Old Testament, this is where Trinitarian thinking comes in. I mean, the Spirit gets looped into this matrix of ideas here in other passages, not in this one or the Daniel passages. But the Spirit will get talked about in the same angel and God language in other passages in the Old Testament. This is the pool—these kinds of passages where you have two figures (and if the Spirit's looped in then you have three) that are different but yet they get talked about in the same way as deity—as God. This is actually where Godhead thinking originates and comes from and, hence, where Trinitarian theology really comes from. It's not really the formulaic expressions Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, like in the Great Commission or something like that. Those presume the idea. But as far as the theology of the idea, it is not something that just pops into existence in the New Testament. It has deep Old Testament roots. And again, if you've read *Unseen Realm*, if you've maybe watched my Two Powers presentation on YouTube, you will also know that Second Temple Jewish texts do the same thing. You will also know about Alan Segal's 1977 book (it was a seminal work at the time) called *The Two Powers in Heaven*. Segal was a professor of Judaic Studies or Rabbinic Studies. He passed away a few years ago. But he had a simple question: Since all these

Jewish texts in the Second Temple period... We have a number of Jewish texts that speak of two Yahweh figures, or will identify Yahweh as a man or this angel while still being Yahweh invisible. When did Judaism lose this theology? Because you don't... It's not taught. It's not taught today. And Segal's work basically established that this is an example of a point of Jewish doctrine that was later declared a heresy by Jews—by Jewish religious authorities—in the second century A.D. Okay? That's what Segal's book is about. He was not an evangelical Christian. He was a Jew—and a serious one, and a well-known rabbinic scholar. You probably also know about Daniel Boyarin and his work in this area. Maybe Benjamin Sommer, *The Bodies of God*—how in the ancient Near East you can have God be more than one person at the same time. You can have a deity be different deities, but the same deity at the same time. Again, this is not... What we think of as Trinitarian thinking is not invented by crazy Jesus-followers in the first few centuries of what we call the early Church. It is *much older than that* and it's not isolated to the followers of Jesus. You get it in Judaism; you get it in the Old Testament. And even the wider ancient world at least has the category of this kind of talk.

55:00

So that's Revelation 10—the mighty angel and the little scroll. So next time we're going to hit Revelation 11, which I've already said a few things about. That'll probably take us two episodes in Revelation 11. I don't know; that's just a guess. But we will hit Revelation 11 next time with the two witnesses. And along the way in that chapter, we'll finally hit the seventh trumpet as well.

TS: Yeah, I encourage everybody to go watch your Two Powers in Heaven YouTube video. That's probably one of the first ones. That's an old one, Mike. You did that a long time ago, didn't you?

MH: Yeah, it is. Yeah, the first one... Boy... It's got to be ten years or more ago. I've done that talk since. But you can still find the original one. It was at a messianic congregation, actually, in Washington where I did that for the first time on video.

TS: And what was the reception of that when you did it?

MH: Oh, they really enjoyed it. They thought it was wonderful. They had not heard of Segal or the Two Powers idea. They were believers in Jesus, obviously, because it's a messianic congregation. But they didn't know the backstory to a lot of it. So they really liked it.

TS: Good stuff. Alright, Mike. Well, we're going to be taking a break from Revelation and we're going to have an interview. I believe Mike Bird is next on deck, and then a Q&A, and then we'll get into chapter 11 of Revelation. So looking forward to that interview. And with that, Mike, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.